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WHAT KANSAS URBAN LEADERS THINK ABOUT COOPERATIVES - AND WHY

by Irwin W. Rust

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FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Joseph G. Knapp, Administrator

The Farmer Cooperative Service conducts research studies and service activities of assistance to farmers in connection with cooperatives engaged in marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and supplying business services. The work of the Service relates to problems of management, organization, policies, financing, merchandising, product quality, costs, efficiency, and membership.

The Service publishes the results of such studies; confers and advises with officials of farmer cooperatives; and works with educational agencies, cooperatives, and others in the dissemination of information relating to cooperative principles and practices.

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WHAT KANSAS URBAN LEADERS THINK ABOUT COOPERATIVES--AND WHY

by
Irwin W. Rust, Chief
Membership Relations Branch

What is the cooperative image in the minds of urban people in Kansas? How was that image created?

The answers to these questions are vitally important to cooperatives. For public opinion affects the economic and legal climate in which cooperatives conduct business. So a friendly, positive, and constructive opinion is essential.

All private enterprises in the United States, including cooperatives, operate in an increasingly complex framework of local, State, and Federal laws and regulations. The public has a voice in framing those laws and regulations. Thus, it is important for cooperatives to know what the public thinks about them. If the public does not think well of cooperatives, or misunderstands them, actions not in the best interest of cooperatives may be taken.

HOW YOU FIND AN IMAGE

The Kansas Cooperative Council, Topeka, knew the importance of a good cooperative image in the minds of the general public -- as well as in the minds of farmers. And it knew that good images don't just happen.

But, it did not know what the Kansas cooperative image was. Nor, did it know what Kansas cooperatives were doing to make that image a good one. So the Council asked Farmer Cooperative Service (FCS) to help them find the answer.

Three Participants in Study

The Council backed its request with money, manpower, and cooperation. It asked Kansas State University, Manhattan, to help and the University agreed to do so. The Council also enlisted the services of some 100 Kansas cooperative executives to interview farmers. And it raised funds to pay for one phase of a three-part study organized and directed by FCS.

The three phases of the study were: (1) A study of urban leaders' attitudes toward cooperatives; (2) a similar examination of farmers' attitudes; and, (3) a reivew of the member and public relations programs Kansas cooperatives were using to inform their members and the public about the nature, role, and activities of cooperatives.

Farmer Cooperative Service, using the funds raised by the Council as well as its own, contracted with Agri-Research, Inc., a Kansas-based private research firm, to conduct the urban phase of the study. FCS directed the farmer part of the study. In addition, FCS, aided by the Kansas Cooperative Council, reviewed the member and public relations programs of Kansas cooperatives.

This report gives highlights of findings of the urban phase of the study and touches briefly on ways to improve the cooperative image in the minds of Kansas urban leaders.

A much more detailed report of the urban study containing statistical analysis and supporting data will be published later. Statements and conclusions contained herein are based on that material.

Results of the farmer phase of the study are being prepared as a separate report.

Urban Officials Contacted

In the urban phase of the cooperative image study, interviewers contacted 256 urban officials in 65 Kansas cities and towns to learn their views about farmer cooperatives. The people all lived in cities with a population over 3,500. They included executive secretaries of chambers of commerce, editors of leading newspapers, chief executives of leading banks, and presidents of local chapters of four leading service clubs.

These 256 officials represented positions of influence in urban communities, and, as such, were individuals whose attitudes were important to cooperatives. While they could not all be expected to be able to shape public opinion, it was reasonable to expect that they did at least reflect responsible urban opinion.

The 256 officials gave their opinions on 41 specific questions relating to cooperatives. They also answered 16 factual questions about cooperatives. Finally, they indicated the sources of cooperative information upon which they based their opinions, and the types of contacts they found helpful in forming their basic feelings about cooperatives.

Measures Used

Answers to the 41 opinion questions gave a measure of attitudes toward cooperatives, and the strength or intensity of those attitudes. Answers to the factual questions gave a measure of both knowledge and understanding of cooperatives.

The measures developed were separate indexes, computed in three categories: (1) Nature and operation of cooperatives, (2) place and function of cooperatives, and (3) public policy affecting cooperatives.

A computer was used to summarize, tabulate, and analyze these indexes. The purpose of this analysis was to determine: (1) Characteristics of respondent urban officials that were related to their attitudes, (2) sources of information about cooperatives associated with positive and negative attitudes, and (3) types of contacts instrumental in helping to develop positive or negative attitudes toward cooperatives.

ATTITUDES, FEELINGS, AND UNDERSTANDING

Here's what the study revealed about the cooperative image among urban officials in Kansas. Equally important is what it revealed about how that image was created.

In the following discussion, the word "attitude" is used in the sense of approval or disapproval, the word "feeling" as a measure of intensity. The word "understanding" connotes a general knowledge of the cooperative as an institution. "Positive" and "negative" equate with "favorable" and "unfavorable," respectively.

General Opinion

Most Kansas urban officials believed farmers have a right to organize and operate cooperatives, but that cooperatives have had a negative effect on other forms of businesses. They believed that cooperatives enjoy tax advantages and other special privileges and believed these privileges should be eliminated.

Most urban officials had a reasonably good overall understanding of cooperatives. But they understood the nature and operation of farmer cooperatives better than the place and function of these associations. And they had a good deal of misunderstanding about taxation and other public policy issues affecting cooperatives.

Variations in Patterns

Patterns of attitude, feeling, and understanding varied, depending on the aspect of cooperation being considered.

Responses to questions about the nature and operation of cooperatives showed relatively good understanding, mild feelings, and positive attitudes.

Responses to questions about the place and function of cooperatives showed somewhat less understanding, somewhat stronger feelings, and slightly negative attitudes.

Responses to questions about public policy affecting cooperatives often revealed a low level of understanding, relatively strong feelings, and very negative attitudes.

The officials answered public policy questions more willingly than those in the other two areas, but were least willing to answer the factual questions about public policy issues affecting cooperatives.

In general, the urban officials were more tolerant in their attitudes toward particular cooperatives known to them personally than in their attitudes toward farmer cooperatives in the United States as a whole.

Their attitudes in the area of public policy were definitely less negative when thinking of farmer cooperatives in Kansas than when they were thinking of cooperatives in general.

They were slightly more tolerant in their attitudes toward the place and role of cooperatives operating in Kansas than toward cooperatives in general. However, they were more sympathetic toward the nature and operation of cooperatives in a theoretical or abstract sense than toward the nature and operation of specific cooperatives with which they had some familiarity as institutions.

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION CHANNELS

Officials of chambers of commerce, newspapers, banks, and service clubs in Kansas indicated some reliance on a variety of sources of information on cooperatives. Table 1 shows how various sources scored.

Newspapers were the leading source of current information on cooperatives. Respondents ranked both news and feature articles in newspapers above any other source in actual use for information about cooperatives.

Personal contacts with farmers, businessmen, and cooperative leaders ranked next to newspaper news and feature articles as sources of information on cooperatives. Of these three, farmers were the most important personal contact. Personal contacts with businessmen came next and personal contacts with cooperative leaders third. Personal contacts with professional men and other personal contacts ranked somewhat lower in importance as sources of information about cooperatives.

Meetings of businessmen not associated with cooperatives were much more important than meetings of cooperatives for information about cooperatives. Publications issued by organizations and associations of businesses other than cooperatives scored higher than publications issued by cooperatives, State councils, universities, or Government agencies.

General magazine articles scored much higher than periodicals published by cooperatives or cooperative councils as sources of information about cooperatives. This is doubtless due to the fact that these officials do not ordinarily get or read strictly cooperative material.

Radio and television were not considered major sources of information on cooperatives. In both media, newscasts ranked as most important, feature programs second, and advertising as the least important means of learning about cooperatives. Newspaper advertising ranked well above either magazine advertising or radio and television advertising.

Table 1: Kansas urban officials' scoring of sources of information about farmer cooperatives

Source	Average Score 1/
News articles in newspapers	5.5
Feature articles in newspapers	5.2
Contacts with farmers	4.5
Contacts with businessmen other than cooperative executives	4.0
Contacts with cooperative leaders	3.9
Magazine articles	3.7
General business publications	2.6
Newspaper advertising	2.5
Meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives	2.3
Cooperative council periodicals	2.2
Contacts with professional men	2.2
Participation in community activities	2.0
Cooperative publications	2.0
Government publications	2.0
Radio newscasts	1.9
Television newscasts	1.9
Periodicals published by cooperatives	1.9
University publications	1.8
Cooperative council publications	1.8
Radio programs	1.8
Television programs	1.8
Cooperative meetings	1.7
Television advertising	1.6
Radio advertising	1.6
Magazine advertising	1.4
Meetings of professional men	1.2

1/ Scored as follows:

Of major importance	8	Of little importance	2
Of some importance	4	Of no importance	0

INFORMATION SOURCES AFFECT ATTITUDES

In addition to revealing sources of cooperative information most used by Kansas urban officials, the study sought to learn what effect those sources had on attitudes. Data in Table 2 records sources of cooperative information ranked in descending order of importance as contributors to basic attitudes. It is important to distinguish between Table 2 and Table 1, which ranks sources of information without regard to their effect on basic attitudes.

Personal contacts were the most influential in helping officials form their basic attitudes toward farmer cooperatives. Contacts with business associates not connected with cooperatives scored highest, contacts with friends second, and contacts with cooperative leaders third among all possible types of contacts contributing to basic attitudes.

Contacts with parents, wife's family, superiors, and others ranked well below the top three types of personal contacts.

Meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives ranked fourth in importance as a contact influencing the basic attitudes of the respondents toward cooperatives. Meetings of cooperatives were lower, and miscellaneous meetings last in list of types of contacts from this point of view.

General business publications ranked fifth in contributing to basic attitudes about cooperatives. Other publications ranked sixth, and publications by cooperatives, seventh. Government publications ranked 11th; university publications, 14th; and books on cooperatives, 19th on the list.

Table 2: Contacts and sources of information contributing to basic attitudes of urban officials in Kansas

Source	Average Score 1/
Contacts with businessmen other than cooperative executives	3.8
Contacts with friends	3.5
Contacts with cooperative leaders	3.1
Meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives	2.5
General business publications	2.3
Other publications	1.7
Cooperative publications	1.6
Television programs	1.6
Radio programs	1.6
Cooperative meetings	1.6
Government publications	1.5
Cooperative council publications	1.5
Contacts with own family	1.5
University publications	1.2
Contacts with superiors	1.0
Contacts with wife's family	1.0
Other personal contacts	0.8
Cooperative membership	0.8
Books on cooperatives	0.8
Movies and film strips (on cooperatives)	0.5
Miscellaneous meetings	0.4

1/ Scored as follows:

Of major importance	8	Of little importance	2
Of some importance	4	Of no importance	0

Membership in a cooperative ranked low in the list of 21 types of contacts contributing to the basic attitudes of the urban officials toward cooperatives, probably because few had ever been cooperative members.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

Much of the difference in attitude toward farmer cooperatives in the United States among urban officials in Kansas could be explained by various influences which at one time or another had affected the officials measured in the study.

The attitudes of each official were analyzed in terms of 19 variables relating to that official. These variables included such items as age, occupation, State where he attended high school and college, and size of city. Study showed six characteristics associated with positive attitudes, five with negative attitudes, and eight bore no measurable relationship to either positive or negative attitudes.

The two most important characteristics associated with positive attitudes toward cooperatives were a positive attitude toward nearby cooperatives in Kansas and a good understanding of cooperatives. Urban officials who thought well of nearby cooperatives with which they were acquainted had positive attitudes toward cooperatives in general. Those who were negative in their attitudes toward nearby cooperatives had negative attitudes toward farmer cooperatives in general.

Extent of the official's understanding of cooperatives was equally important in determining his attitude. The greater his understanding, the more positive his attitude. The less his understanding, the more negative his attitude.

Analyses showed that officials who showed a favorable attitude toward cooperatives also displayed these personal characteristics:

1. A willingness to answer most of the questions asked

2. A small town, rather than a large city, background

3. Early residence in section of United States other than Kansas or Midwest

The area in Kansas where the official lived had only a minor effect upon his attitudes. Most differences in attitudes between residents of various parts of the State were explained by other characteristics.

The major characteristic associated with negative attitudes toward cooperatives was a strong feeling regarding these associations. Officials, tending definitely to agree or disagree with every statement about cooperatives had much more negative attitudes than those not so definite in their opinions.

Other characteristics associated with negative attitudes were (1) a tendency to give a "yes" or "no" answer to all factual questions about cooperatives, rather than saying "don't know" when the respondent didn't know the answer, (2) association with businesses in direct competition with cooperatives, (3) city as opposed to a farm or small-town background, and (4) long-time residence in Kansas or bordering States as opposed to short-time residence.

Age had little or nothing to do with attitude toward cooperatives. The number and type of cooperatives to which the respondent may have belonged had no measurable bearing on his attitude. The size of city where the official had spent the major portion of his adult life was not statistically significant in helping to explain his attitude. The same was true of where he attended high school and college.

Frequency of moving from one address to another before reaching high school age, the final factor analyzed, likewise was found to have no significance in explaining Kansas urban officials' patterns of attitude toward farmer cooperatives.

RELATIONSHIP OF ATTITUDES TO COOPERATIVE INFORMATION SOURCES

Some of the sources used for information on cooperatives had a statistically significant relationship with the attitudes of the officials toward cooperatives. Some individual sources relied upon by the urban officials were associated with positive attitudes, and others were associated with negative attitudes. Still other sources of information had no significant association with either positive or negative attitudes.

Urban officials with negative attitudes toward cooperatives reported that for information about cooperatives they relied upon: (1) Contacts with businessmen other than cooperative executives, (2) general business publications, (3) meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives, (4) meetings of professional men, (5) miscellaneous meetings, (6) other publications, (7) television newscasts, (8) radio advertising,[1/] (9) magazine advertising,[1/] and (10) university publications. The higher the score given to each of the above sources of information, the more negative the respondent's index of attitude toward cooperatives.

In contrast, respondents with positive attitudes toward cooperatives reported that for information about cooperatives they relied most heavily upon: (1) Cooperative publications, (2) contacts with cooperative leaders, (3) cooperative meetings, (4) cooperative council publications, (5) participation in church activities,[2/] (6) participation in youth activities,[2/] and (7) television programs.

1/ Because of their minor significance in affecting attitudes, these variables are not included in Table 2.

2/ Because of their minor significance as sources of information or as affecting attitudes, these variables are not included in Table 1 or Table 2.

The higher the index of use made of each of the above seven sources of information, the more positive the index of attitude for the respondent.

Some sources of information about cooperatives used by urban officials (Table 1) showed little or no association with indexes of attitudes (Table 2). These sources included: (1) News articles in newspapers, (2) feature articles in newspapers, (3) contacts with farmers, (4) magazine articles, (5) cooperative council periodicals, (6) participation in community activities, (7) Government publications, (8) radio newscasts, (9) periodicals published by cooperatives, and (10) radio programs.

INFLUENCES HELPING FORM ATTITUDES

Analysis of the scores respondents gave to different kinds of influences helping form their basic attitudes about cooperatives revealed that some types of influences resulted in positive attitudes, some in negative attitudes, and some had little effect in determining whether attitudes were positive or negative. Seven of the 21 types of influences reported by respondents (Table 2 on Page 7) were associated with negative attitudes toward cooperatives.

In order of their importance in establishing negative attitudes toward public policy affecting cooperatives, the seven influences were: (1) General business publications, (2) contacts with businessmen other than cooperative executives, (3) university publications, 1/ (4) books on cooperatives, 1/ (5) contacts with superiors, (6) other personal contacts, and (7) meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives.

In order of their importance as associated with negative attitudes toward the place and function of cooperatives in the American private enterprise system, the influences were: (1) General business publications, (2) books on cooperatives, (3) contacts with businessmen other than cooperative executives, (4) meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives, (5) university publications, (6) other personal contacts, and (7) contacts with superiors.

In order of their importance as associated with negative attitudes toward the nature of cooperatives, the seven influences ranked: (1) University publications, (2) meetings of businessmen other than cooperative executives, (3) general business publications, (4) books on cooperatives, (5) contacts with businessmen other than cooperative executives, (6) other personal contacts, and (7) contacts with superiors.

The eight types of influence found to have a positive effect on attitudes also varied in relative importance between the three indexes of attitude. In descending order of degree of association with positive attitudes toward public policy affecting cooperatives, the

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1/ These are two responses needing further study. The length of the questionnaire made it impossible to prove certain questions as deeply as we would have liked.

influences were: (1) Government publications, (2) contacts with cooperative leaders, (3) cooperative council publications, (4) cooperative membership, (5) contacts with wife's family, (6) television programs, (7) contacts with own family, and (8) cooperative publications.

The descending order of degree of association with positive attitudes toward the place and function of cooperatives in the American private enterprise system were: (1) Contacts with cooperative leaders, (2) cooperative council publications, (3) television programs, (4) Government publications, (5) cooperative membership, (6) contacts with own family, (7) cooperative publications, and (8) contacts with wife's family.

The eight influences ranked in descending order of degree of association with positive attitudes toward the nature of cooperatives were: (1) Cooperative council publications, (2) contacts with cooperative leaders, (3) cooperative membership, (4) cooperative publications, (5) Government publications, (6) television programs, (7) contacts with wife's family, and (8) contacts with own family.

Little importance in determining whether attitudes were positive or negative could be attributed to the remaining six types of influences respondents listed as helping to form their basic attitudes about cooperatives. The neutral influences included (1) contacts with personal friends, (2) radio programs, (3) cooperative meetings, (4) movies and film strips (on cooperatives), (5) other publications (mostly newspapers), and (6) other personal contacts.

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION PROGRAMS IN KANSAS

To shed additional light on urban attitudes toward cooperatives in Kansas, we sought information on the means Kansas cooperatives used to keep their members and the general public informed. To secure this information we mailed a questionnaire to all rural cooperatives in the State. Sixty-eight percent of the cooperatives returned the questionnaire.

Table 3 lists the communication channels they use to inform members and the public. Channels have been ranked in terms of the percentage of respondent cooperatives using them.

Comparison of the cooperatives' ranking of communication channels they used with the ranking of sources of information used by Kansas urban leaders (Table 1) reveals some interesting contrasts.

Cooperatives rank member meeting first as a means of keeping people informed; urban leaders rank these meeting 22nd in order of importance as a source of information.

Newspaper news and feature articles, ranked one and two by urban leaders, are ninth on the cooperative list.

Talking with a cooperative staff member is ranked second by cooperatives. Contact with cooperative leaders is ranked fifth by urban leaders as a source of information.

Talking with a cooperative member was rated seventh, and with a director fourth by cooperatives. Contacts with farmers was ranked third by urban leaders as a source of information. And magazine articles, ranked 23rd by cooperatives, are sixth on the urban list.

Table 3: Communication channels used by Kansas cooperatives

Information means	Percent of cooperatives using[1/]
Annual member meeting	92.8
Talking with staff members	88.0
News advertisements	74.9
Talking with a director	73.2
Sponsoring 4-H activities	58.8
Radio	45.7
Talking with cooperative member	43.6
Newsletter	43.3
Information leaflets	40.5
Newspaper articles	40.5
Special flyers	37.8
Sponsoring plant tours	30.6
Sponsoring FFA activities	28.9
Talking with Extension Service	28.5
Television	27.5
Service Club, church, or other meeting	23.7
Member magazine	23.7
Providing speakers and materials to vo-ag classes	22.7
Miscellaneous meetings	21.3
Sponsored speaking and essay contests	20.6
District member meeting	16.2
Other meetings	14.1
Miscellaneous printed material	11.0
Talking with people not associated with cooperatives	9.3
Magazine articles	4.5
Providing material for speakers and college classes	4.5

1/ In three instances two different communication channels were used by the same number of cooperatives.

In our review of cooperative information programs we asked cooperatives to report whether or not they had a formal, planned program of member and public relations. Their replies are reported in Table 4. It appears that many Kansas cooperatives are leaving good member and public relations to chance, rather than making a conscious, planned effort to take advantage of every opportunity to improve their image.

Table 4 Kansas cooperatives reporting a planned member and public relations program

Type of cooperative	Number responding	Number having program	Percent having program
Marketing and supply cooperative	217	54	24
Rural Electric cooperative	33	29	88
Production credit associations	12	9	67
Federal Land Bank association	12	9	67
Other	17	8	60
Total	291	109	37

CONCLUSIONS

*A definite need exists for more effective public relations programs by cooperatives addressed to key urban people in Kansas. The need is most acute in the area of public policy affecting cooperatives. Negative attitudes coupled with strong feelings in this area have possible implications as to legislation and Government policy undesirable to cooperatives if nothing is done to improve them.

*The attitudes of urban officials can be improved by programs of cooperative education, as the study showed attitudes closely associated with good understanding of cooperatives.

*Public relations programs of individual cooperatives have been relatively effective in improving attitudes toward the nature of cooperatives, but less effective in improving attitudes toward the place and function of cooperatives.

*Such programs by individual cooperatives have been relatively ineffective for improving attitudes toward public policy affecting cooperatives. Programs conducted through State cooperative councils, and information obtained from Government publications have been much more effective in improving attitudes toward public policy issues.

*Kansas urban officials are reached most effectively through newspapers and through general business and professional associations and activities in which they regularly participate. They also are reached directly through personal contacts and with printed materials. However, reaction of urban officials to information obtained from some of these sources is undesirable from a cooperative point of view, being associated with negative attitudes. Cooperatives can do much through these communication channels to improve their image.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Kansas cooperative leaders need to take a hard look at their member and public relations programs, in terms of effects or lack thereof the study showed such programs are having on urban leaders. The hard look should include a review of what this study learned about the effects of sources of information on attitudes toward cooperatives, an attempt to counteract outside influences contributing to negative attitudes, and elimination or change of cooperative sources associated with negative attitudes.

2. Cooperatives would benefit by intensifying use of those communications channels considered by urban leaders to be good sources of information and revealed by research to be associated with friendly, positive attitudes toward cooperatives.

For example, contacts with cooperative leaders ranked near the top in order of importance in having a positive effect on attitudes. And a majority of cooperatives responding to our questionnaire reported using staff members and directors to keep members and the general public informed about cooperative activities.

3. However, news and feature items in newspapers, though given the highest scores by urban officials as sources of information about cooperatives, showed little influence on attitudes, and were reported by less than 45 percent of respondent cooperatives as means of informing people about cooperatives.

There appears to be a good opportunity for cooperatives to use newspapers more frequently, and to improve the content of news stories submitted for publication, in telling the cooperative story and in generating positive and friendly attitudes towards cooperatives.

4. Urban officials in Kansas rated both radio and television as being of little importance as sources of information about cooperatives. However, television programs did have some positive effect on attitudes. Over 45 percent of the cooperatives reported using radio, and 27 percent reported using television to inform people about cooperatives.

Since this type of communication is expensive, if cooperatives use radio and television in part as a means of informing people about cooperatives, they need to be sure the programs are doing what they are supposed to do.

Our research did not inquire into the content of radio and television programs sponsored by cooperatives. It may be that the inclusion of more institutional material in the programs would increase their effectiveness as a source of cooperative information and in creating favorable attitudes. Or it may be that Kansas cooperatives prefer to confine institutional material to other media.

5. In some instances, communication channels or information practices used by cooperatives, and which urban officials found relatively ineffective, can be improved. The annual member meeting is a good example.

The annual member meeting is specifically designed to inform members about their cooperative. With careful planning, and a lot of hard work, the annual meeting can be a powerful device for strengthening and improving the cooperative image in the minds of the public. It should be used to that end to the fullest extent possible.

6. And this brings us to the need for planning to achieve the most effective member and public relations program for time and money spent. For example, fewer than 25 percent of the marketing and purchasing cooperatives reporting a planned program. The opportunity for more effective use of the annual meeting to improve the Kansas cooperative image seems substantial.

A continuing planned, Statewide program of member and public education is virtually essential, if the Kansas cooperative image is to be improved. There are two reasons: (1) To be effective, an educational program must be a continuing process, not a one-shot, sometime effort; and, (2) planning makes it possible for a cooperative to minimize costs by concentrating on the most effective educational devices.

And in some cases the devices revealed by research to be the most effective in informing the public and in creating a favorable attitude are also relatively inexpensive -- for example, "Personal contacts with farmers." A well thought-out plan would put information into the hands of farmers that would enable them to make the most of such personal contacts.

For individual cooperatives, experience has taught that effective information programs should include the following elements:

1. Board of director awareness of the importance of keeping members and the public informed, and board support of a well-defined continuing education program by providing adequate funds for the purpose.

2. Preparation and implementation of such a program, including a delineation of communication channels and program objectives, identification of segments of public to be reached, development of specific items of information to be disseminated to those groups, and assignment of responsibility for preparation and conduct of the program.

3. Provision for periodic review of program effectiveness.

State cooperative council programs need to include the same elements. But the council has added roles -- to coordinate efforts of individual cooperatives, to provide expert specialized guidance, to stimulate cooperative interest in improving local programs, and to intensify council efforts shown by the study to be most effective when done by the State council.

This study showed that in some respects State council efforts were most effective, and that in others the influence of the individual cooperative, its staff and members, did the most to inform and to create positive attitudes. To achieve the kind of public image they desire, Kansas cooperators will need to make maximum use of all the resources at their command, in the light of the findings of this study.